

**WASHINGTON. D.C.** – House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform Ranking Member Darrell Issa (R-CA), in letters sent last night to House Oversight and Government Reform Committee Members, urged Republican and Democratic Members of the Committee not to support legislation – H.R. 626 – which would create a new \$850 million paid parental leave provision for federal employees during a time of economic crisis.

“While our committee contemplates enhancing federal benefits packages, the rest of working America is living in fear – worrying about not just losing their benefits, but their jobs completely,” wrote Issa. “Taxpayers are reaching the breaking point when it comes to subsidizing higher federal spending at their expense. Responsible American families are cutting costs and dealing with job loss and the destruction of their savings and retirement accounts. It is simply not the right time to ask taxpayers to pay for a new benefit for federal employees.”

The House Oversight and Government Reform Committee has scheduled a Wednesday mark-up and committee vote on H.R. 626, the “Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act of 2009 (FEPPLA).” H.R. 626 would grant federal employees (mother and father) four weeks of paid parental leave in connection with the birth or arrival of a new child in addition to already available leave. Federal employees are already allowed to use any paid leave for parental leave under current law.

“A number of members on this committee represent communities that have been especially hard hit by this economic crisis,” added Issa. “It is simply not the time to create a costly new benefit for federal employees on the backs of those who are most worried about keeping their own job.”

**The text of the letter sent to committee members last night falls below:**

Dear \_\_\_\_:

On Wednesday, May 6, 2009, the Full Committee will consider H.R. 626, the "Federal Employees Paid Parental Leave Act of 2009 (FEPPLA)." I write to ask that you join me in opposing this bill, since it sends the wrong message at the wrong time to working American taxpayers and families that are struggling in a difficult economy.

Americans in the private sector are losing their jobs and their benefits, as the country heads into double-digit unemployment. At the same time, federal employees enjoy one of the highest levels of job security of any sector in the nation along with generous benefits packages.

I fully recognize that, like their private sector counterparts, most Federal employees work hard and deserve competitive compensation and benefits packages. In these perilous economic times, however, when many in the private sector are having to make difficult cuts, it is inappropriate for us to heap even more generous benefits on federal employees.

While our committee contemplates enhancing federal benefits packages, the rest of working America is living in fear – worrying about not just losing their benefits, but their jobs completely. The Bureau of Labor Statistics just reported that Metropolitan unemployment rates were higher in March 2009 than March 2008 in every Metropolitan area across the nation. Eighteen Metropolitan areas recorded jobless rates of at least 15%. The national unemployment rate is currently at 9%, a 5.2% percent increase over 2008.

This bill is being considered during a time when the federal government should be acting with greater fiscal responsibility. According to the New York Times, the President has said that the government must act "the same way any responsible family does in setting its budget..." He has challenged his cabinet to cut \$100 million from their federal budgets and yet the Congressional Budget Office has indicated that this bill will cost taxpayers \$850 million over the first five years of implementation.

Taxpayers are reaching the breaking point when it comes to subsidizing higher federal spending at their expense. Responsible American families are cutting costs and dealing with job loss and the destruction of their savings and retirement accounts. It is simply not the right time to ask taxpayers to pay for a new benefit for Federal employees.

For these reasons, I urge you to consider your working family constituents back home and respectfully request that you join me in opposing this bill.

Sincerely,

Darrell Issa

Ranking Member